



Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council

## PRESS RELEASE

### Rhode Island Aquaculture Initiative Announces An Updated Internet-Based Aquaculture, Fisheries and Habitat Map Server

December 9, 2003

The Rhode Island Aquaculture Initiative is pleased to announce that an updated internet based Aquaculture, Fisheries and Habitat Map Server is now available. The Rhode Island Aquaculture Initiative (RIAI) is a unique collaboration of federal, state, university, and industry partners working together to grow the aquaculture industry in Rhode Island. One of the first projects funded by the RIAI was to enhance an ongoing mapping project that grew out of the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) Working Group on Fisheries and Aquaculture Regulations. The Map Server is a product of this initiative.

The updated site can be found at: <http://www.edc.uri.edu/fish/>

The need to chart the uses of Rhode Island's coastal and offshore waters has been apparent for years. As the population in the region continues to grow, more conflicting uses will be proposed for these waters which are already heavily used by a wide variety of interests. These interests include recreational boating, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, commercial vessel traffic, military vessels, and research vessels. For example, recreational vessel interests include sail boats, power boats, row boats, kayaks, canoes, even ground-effect airplanes, all moving between 1 and 100 knots. Additionally, the shoreline itself is heavily used for recreation, and moorings can be found just about anywhere just off the shore.

This project is an offshoot of the CRMC Working Group on Aquaculture and Fisheries Regulations. The purpose of the current charts produced by the Working Group is to identify various areas of the state's waters that are used for fishing and aquaculture. Future work related to these charts will include the identification of all the stakeholders and the areas of the state's waters that they use.

As such, the major goal of this project is to further refine the knowledge base on the current uses of Rhode Island's coastal and marine waters. This is critical to the planning of any future development or activities that propose to utilize this resource. The resultant maps will provide tools for planners to ensure that all stakeholders' interests are included in the throughout any planning processes.

**Sponsors:**

- The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
- The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service
- The University of Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station

**Funding:**

- The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service generously provided funding for this project.
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**Collaborators:**

- The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
- The Ocean State Fishermen's Association
- The Rhode Island Shellfishermen's Association
- The Rhode Island Salt Water Anglers Association
- The Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's Association
- The Ocean State Aquaculture Association
- Roger Williams University, Center for Economic and Environmental Development
- The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service
- The University of Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station
- The University of Rhode Island Department of Animal, Veterinary and Animal Sciences
- The University of Rhode Island Sea Grant
- The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Thanks to the Environmental Data Center at URI for making this web based approach possible.

The Environmental Data Center (EDC) is a geographic information system (GIS) laboratory in the URI Department of Natural Resources Science, College of Environmental and Life Sciences (CELS). The mission of the EDC is to support the use of contemporary tools of spatial data processing in the analysis of environmental data. This is achieved through collaborative research with faculty in the Department of Natural Resources Science and projects with agencies external to URI. The EDC is the center of technical expertise in GIS for the state of Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) database is stored at the EDC. The RIGIS database is the most comprehensive and detailed of any state in the country and contains information on almost all aspects of Rhode Island's natural and cultural resources. Major areas of research at the EDC are spatial data modeling, ecological mapping, and data integration for environmental applications.